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TOSEC 248

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.), PFOR
SUBJECT: REPORTAGE OF TRAVELING PRESS, SATURDAY, MAY 4

FOR ANDERSON FROM HARE

SUMMARY: GWERTZMAN AND BERGER HAVE PAGE 1 STORIES, NYT EMPHASIZING SOME PROGRESS MADE IN DAMASCUS WHILE POST NOTES NO AGREEMENT REACHED AND ISSUE OF DIVIDING LINE RESERVED FOR NEXT VISIT. O'LEARY NOTES HAK'S HOPE FOR A DE FACTO RESTRICTION ON HOSTILITIES AS RESULT FIRST ROUND. AP EX ALEXANDRIA LEADS WITH HAK APPEARING TO HAVE WON AGREEMENT TO SLOW DOWN FIGHTING IN GOLAN. UPI QUOTES HIGH AMERICAN OFFICIAL THAT ISRAEL AND SYRIA ARE IN "NEGOTIATING RANGE" ON ALL ISSUES EXCEPT HOW FAR ISRAEL SHOULD WITHDRAW.

1. GWERTZMAN, NYT, HAS ARTICLE, PAGE 1 ABOVE FOLD (WITH PIX OF HAK WARM WELCOME FROM FM KHADDAM), WITH LEAD THAT "SOME PROGRESS" MADE TROOP SEPARATION ACCORDING US SPOKES-MAN. GWERTZMAN INDICATES THAT TALKS SEEM TO HAVE GONE FURTHER THAN EXPECTED. AS INCENTIVE, HAK PLEDGED TO EXTEND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE ONCE DISENGAGEMENT ACHIEVED. GWERTZ-MAN QUOTES MCCLOSKEY'S STATEMENT WHICH HE CHARACTERIZES AS
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CAREFULLY WORDED AND THEN NOTING RESTRAINTS PLACED ON

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SPOKESMAN BY SYRIAN SIDE QUOTES HIM TO SAY "SOME PROGRESS MADE" AND HIS INTERPRETATION THAT THE SUBSTANTIAL ELEMENTS

REFERRED TO FOR THE NEXT VISIT "AS BEING THE ISSUE OF THE LINE, AND IT IS THAT WHICH WILL PRINCIPALLY BE RESERVED FOR MORE DETAILED DISCUSSIONS." GWERTZMAN ALSO DWELLS ON WARMTH OF RECEPTION AND PRAISE WHICH KHADDAM GIVES HAK, ESPECIALLY SINCE IT COMES FROM PERSON NOT KNOWN FOR HIS FRIENDLINESS TO US. GWERTZMAN ALSO INDICATES SOME OFFICIALS BELIEVE US INFLUENCE IN SYRIA MAY RISE AS SIGNIFICANTLY AS IN EQYPT, DESPITE STRONG SOVIET PRESENCE, AND FINDS SIGNIFICANCE THAT GROMYKO WAS NOT IN DAMASCUS GIVEN EARLIER SPECULATION THAT HE WOULD BE THERE WHEN HAK ARRIVED. GWERTZMAN CONCLUDES WITH REMARK OF SENIOR OFFICIAL ON PLANE THAT HAK NOW HAS "SHAPE OF A POSSIBLE ACCORD" IN HIS MIND, WITH THE CAVEAT THAT THIS ROUND MUCH MORE DIFFICULT THAN EARLIER EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT.

2. BERGER, POST, PAGE 1 BELOW FOLD (NO PIX), LEADS WITH "SHAPE OF AGREEMENT" EMERGING. BUT NOTES THAT AS OF TODAY NO DECISIONS FORTHCOMING AND NEITHER SIDE PREPARED TO MAKE FIRST PUBLIC MOVE TOWARD CONCESSION. QUOTES MCCLOSKEY ON SOME PROGRESS BEING MADE BUT UNDERLINES MCCLOSKEY'S REMARKS THAT "NO AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED" AND THAT ISSUE OF DIVIDING LINE HAS BEEN RESERVED FOR NEXT VISIT. BERGER INDICATES THAT HAK APPARENTLY MADE LITTLE HEADWAY ON GETTING CEASE-FIRE. IN VIEW ABOVE, BERGER BELIEVES HAK MAY NOW TRY TO COME UP WITH HIS OWN IDEAS SO THAT NEITHER SIDE HAS TO ACCEPT THE OTHERS' PROPOSALS. BERGER ALSO DWELLS ON WARMTH OF RECEPTION AND PARTICULARLY SINGLES OUT KHADDAM'S REFERENCE IN LUNCHEON TOAST TO "ALL IN THE AREA" AS SIGNIFICANT. BERGER COMMENTS THAT HAK ARRIVED IN DAMASCUS WITH ONE STRONG CARD -- THE PROSPECT OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. SUCH AID WOULD PROVIDE SYRIA WITH "AMERICAN OPTION" AND HELP LESSEN STRONG SOVIET INFLUENCE. FACT THAT SYRIAN MINISTERS OF ECONOMY AND EDUCATION WERE AT LUNCHEON MAY BE SEEN THAT SUCH AID WOULD BE WELCOME.

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3. O'LEARY, STAR ON PAGE 5, WITH PIX OF HAK AND KHADDAM ON ARRIVAL IN DAMASCUS. LEADS WITH HAK'S HOPE FOR DE FACTO RESTRICTION ON FIGHTING AND SAYS, ACCORDING TO SENIOR SOURCE, THIS POSSIBILITY DISCUSSED WITH ASSAD AND SOME PROGRESS MADE. HAK KNOWN TO BELIEVE ANTAGONISTS WITHIN NEGOTIATING RANGE ON ALL ISSUES EXCEPT WHERE NEW FRONT LINES SHOULD BE DRAWN. ON OTHER ISSUES, AN OFFICIAL SAID THERE WAS REASONABLE PROGRESS, THOUGH HE REMINDED

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REPORTERS REAL POSSIBILITY HAK MAY LEAVE WITHOUT AGREEMENT AND WILL HAVE TO RETURN. O'LEARY SAYS HAK STILL BELIEVES SOVIETS "NOT BEING UNHELPFUL", AND ACCORDING TO INFORMED OFFICIALS, THEY WERE IMPRESSED BY NEW MODERATE ATTITUDE OF KHADDAM.

4. AP SCHWEID EX ALEXANDRIA LEADS WITH HAK APPEARING TO HAVE WON AGREEMENT ON SLOW DOWN OF FIGHTING IN GOLAN. ALSO NOTES THAT WHEREAS U.S. OFFICIALS BELIEVE ISRAEL AND SYRIA WITHIN "NEGOTIATING RANGE" TWO SIDES REMAIN FAR APART ON WHERE TO DRAW LINES. SCHWEID SAYS WHILE SOVIETS ARE NOT OBSTRUCTING SETTLEMENT, THERE IS NO INDICATION OF THEIR HELPING ONE ALONG. MEANWHILE, IN SYRIA, RUSSIAN DIPLOMATS DISCLOSED GROMYKO WOULD ARRIVE IN DAMASCUS SUNDAY.

5. UPI (NO BYLINE) LEADS WITH HIGH AMERICAN OFFICIAL SAYING THAT ISRAEL AND SYRIA ARE IN "NEGOTIATING RANGE" ON ALL ISSUES EXCEPT HOW FAR ISRAEL SHOULD WITHDRAW. THE OFFICIAL SAYS THAT THERE WAS "REASONABLE PROGRESS" WITH ASSAD. ALSO, THE OFFICIAL SAID HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF BOTH PARTIES EXERCISED "RESTRAINT" IN GOLAN. FROM THE SYRIANS, HOWEVER, UPI REPORTS THAT THEY ARE SAYING NO PROGRESS WAS MADE AND ASSAD REJECTED ALL THE PROPOSALS WHICH HAK BROUGHT FROM ISRAEL. FURTHER, SYRIAN BATTLE COMMUNIQUES REPORT FIGHTING OF UNDIMINISHED INTENSITY.

6. CSM DOES NOT PUBLISH SATURDAY. GLOBE UNAVAILABLE. RUSH

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